

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 4288

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 4109

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (KISSINGER, HENRY A.) XA, OTRA

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S PROPOSED VISIT

REF: LAGOS 4067, LAGOS 4287, STATE 82173

1. I ENCOUNTERED COMMISSIONER GARBA LAST EVENING AT MURTALA MUHAMMED INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT WHERE WE BOTH HAPPENED TO PASS THROUGH THE VIP LOUNGE AT THE SAME TIME. HE DREW ME ASIDE TO SAY HOW DEEPLY HE REGRETTEED THE FMG'S INABILITY TO RECEIVE SECRETARY KISSINGER'S VISIT AT THIS TIME. HE ASKED THAT I PERSONALLY ASSURE THE SECRETARY OF HIS DISAPPOINTMENT IN VIEW OF FMG'S HIGH HOPES FOR SUCH A VISIT.

2. GARBA SAID THAT THE LAST TIME HE HAD TALKED ABOUT THE VISIT WITH THE SECRETARY, HE HAD ASSURED THE SECRETARY THAT HIS PERSONAL SECURITY

WOULD NOT BE IN QUESTION. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF "ALL THAT HAS HAPPENED" SINCE THEN, HE COULD NO LONGER BE SURE THERE WOULD BE NO DEMONSTRATIONS OR MISHAPS."

"YOU KNOW WE STILL HAVE THESE INVESTIGATIONS AND TRIALS GOING ON, AND WE HAVE THESE FELLOWS IN DETENTION. THE WHOLE THING IS TURNING OUT TO BE MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAT WE HAD THOUGHT."

3. GARBA THEN TOOK A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT TACK, SAYING THAT FMG HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED TO NOTE HOW SHORT A PERIOD OF TIME WAS ALLOTTED TO NIGERIA ON THE SECRETARY'S ITINERARY. HE SAID, "THIS WAS NOT WHAT WE HAD IN MIND, AND WE WOULD BE UNABLE TO MAKE SUCH
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A SHORT STAY TRULY WORTHWHILE."

4. I TOLD GARBA I HAD DISCUSSED WITH HIS STAFF THE IMPORTANCE OF AGREEING ON THE EXPLANATION TO BE GIVEN TO THE PRESS IN EVENT OF QUERIES WHY NIGERIA WAS NOT INCLUDED IN THE SECRETARY'S ITINERARY. GARBA AGREED THAT SOMETHING ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES WOULD BE FULLY APPROPRIATE. "THE FMG HAS INFORMED THE STATE DEPARTMENT THAT THE PROPOSED TIMING FOR THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO NIGERIA IS REGRETTABLY NOT CONVENIENT. THE FMG IS HOPEFUL THAT A VISIT CAN BE ARRANGED FOR SOME OTHER MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TIME IN THE FUTURE." GARBA CONCURRED IN MY CABLING HIS ACCEPTANCE OF THIS TEXT TO DEPARTMENT. THIS LANGUAGE IS ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS GUIDANCE PROPOSED IN PARAGRAPH 3 OF STATE 82173. I AM CERTAIN MEA WILL AUTHORIZE AMBASSADOR SANU TO CONCUR IN DEPARTMENT'S SUGGESTED LANGUAGE.

5. GARBA EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR WHAT HE TERMED EMBASSY'S "FOREBEARANCE" DURING RECENT PERIOD OF DEMONSTRATIONS AND OTHER PROVOCATIONS DIRECTED AGAINST US. HE SAID "YOU'VE HAD A LEAST AS MUCH CAUSE FOR DISTRESS AS THE BRITISH BUT YOU DIDN'T OVERREACT LIKE THEY DID." CONTINUING IN WHAT SEEMED TO ME A SOMEWHAT DEFENSIVE MANNER, HE SAID, "YOU WILL HAVE NOTICED THAT WE IN THE FMG HAVE NOT SAID A WORD IN CRITICISM AGAINST YOU." THEN HE BEAT ME TO THE PUNCH WITH "WELL - WITH ONE OR TWO EXCEPTIONS."

(ONE OF THE EXCEPTIONS HE MOST CERTAINLY HAD IN MIND WAS AMBASSADOR HARRIMAN. ANOTHER OUGHT TO BE HIMSELF IF "CRITICISM" CAN INCLUDE ATTACKS ON "US SUPPORT FOR APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA." SEE LAGOS 3605.)

6. GARBA'S COMMENTS BEAR OUT OUR ANALYSIS IN LAGOS 4287 CONCERNING PROBABLE FACTORS PRODUCING FMG'S REQUEST FOR DEFERRAL OF VISIT. TIMING OF SANU'S CALL ON ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFELER MONDAY MORNING, COMBINED WITH HIS QUICK-FOOTED AVOIDANCE OF MY VARIOUS DEVICES TO GET TOGETHER WITH HIM LAST WEEK IN LAGOS, PERSUADE US THAT DECISION FOR DEFERRAL OF VISIT ACTUALLY MADE BY SMC IN ITS MEETING MID LAST WEEK, PRIOR TO OUR OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION TO THEM OF PROPOSED DATES. SANU WANTED QUITE UNDERSTANDABLY TO BE HIMSELF THE BEARER OF THE MESSAGE TO YOU, AND KNEW THAT HE COULDN'T AVOID THE SUBJECT IF HE SAW ME FIRST.

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7. WE ASSUME THAT REFUELING STOP POST-UNCTAD CAN BE REARRANGED FOR ELSEWHERE THAN KANO.
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